

Cultural Council

Members Allowed per

Massachusetts Cultural Council: 5 -22 Members

Quorum:

Set at 5 Members
(Vote of Board of Selectmen 03/18/2019)

Appointed by:

Board of Selectmen

Staggered Terms:

Maximum two consecutive terms or a total of six years. Members must remain off the council for a 1-year interval before serving additional terms.

Description:

The Cultural Council is a permanent committee appointed by the Selectmen and is a part of a network of local and regional cultural councils which receive funding through a central state agency, the Massachusetts Cultural Council. Funds are regranted to individuals and organizations to promote excellence, access, education and diversity in the arts, humanities and interpretive sciences in Belmont.

Toolkit

LCC Public Web Pages

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Annual Report

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Credit & Publicity
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Managing Council
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LCC Program Guidelines
(PDF) »

Requirements

The purpose of the Local Cultural Councils is to support public programs that promote access, education, diversity, and excellence in the arts, humanities, and interpretive sciences in communities across the Commonwealth. Local decision-making is an integral element of this system. LCCs have the right and responsibility to award grants that address cultural needs specific to their communities, and they can decide how to distribute funds as long as the state policies outlined in the program guidelines are followed.

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Council Duties

Each LCC has a number of mandatory duties:

1. *Soliciting community input and assessing local cultural needs*

Each LCC is responsible for ensuring that its grants and programs benefit the community to the greatest extent possible. To this end, each council must conduct regular assessments of cultural needs within its community. Learn more about [gathering community input](#).



Establishing council priorities for the review of grant applications
Based on its community input process, each council is then responsible for determining its own funding priorities. While all councils are strongly encouraged to develop written council

priorities, only councils receiving more than \$20,000 are required to do so. Learn more about [creating council priorities](#).

3. *Communicating with the public*

LCCs are responsible for the following: Promoting local awareness of their programs; informing the public of the availability of funds; publicizing the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of the LCC office or contact person; communicating with grant applicants and recipients. [Sample letters and press releases](#).

4. *Reviewing and recommending action on local applications*

Guidelines regarding local eligibility, review criteria and procedures for the review of applications are laid out in detail in the [LCC Program Guidelines](#). LCCs must also follow all [Open Meeting](#) and [Conflict of Interest Laws](#). Learn more about [how to review grants](#).

5. *Reporting to Mass Cultural Council*

LCCs must submit the LCC Account Form, completed by the city or town, to Mass Cultural Council through Section 1 of the Annual Report in the online office by October 15 each year. Section 2, which calculates the amount available for granting, must also be submitted by October 15.

LCCs must submit the annual report to Mass Cultural Council through the LCC Online Office (www.mass-culture.org) by the statewide reporting deadline each year, generally January 15.

6. *Carrying out other necessary administrative functions*

Additional administrative functions include: the handling and processing of payment requests; all necessary record-keeping; establishment of a local office (if applicable); maintaining communications with the local treasurer; monitoring financial reports; other tasks as necessary for the efficient operation of the

council.

7. *Complying with MCC guidelines, rules, or rulings*

The [LCC Program Guidelines](#) are available [online](#). [Some key requirements are outlined below.](#)

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Council Membership

LCCs consist of at least five but no more than 22 members appointed by the top appointing official in the community (i.e., the mayor, city manager, board of selectmen or executive officer). All appointments must be recorded by the city or town clerk.

Council members should have a demonstrated interest or record of service to the arts, humanities or interpretive sciences. The chief appointing authority, members of the local appropriating authority, and other elected public officials cannot serve as council members.

The term of membership for a council member is three years; members can serve a maximum of two consecutive terms or a total of six years, unless the appointing authority removes a member before the expiration of a term. Members must remain off the council for a one-year interval before serving additional terms. Notwithstanding the expiration of a member's term, under the provisions of M.H.L. c. 10, § 58, a member with an expired term shall continue to "serve until the qualification of such member's successor." This rule is a "safe harbor" provision intended to avoid quorum problems for Councils when waiting for new appointments to be made. Councils and municipalities should not abuse this rule in order to allow members to serve endless or greatly extended terms. Membership and leadership transitions must be handled in responsible and timely matter at the discretion of the municipality and Local Cultural Council.

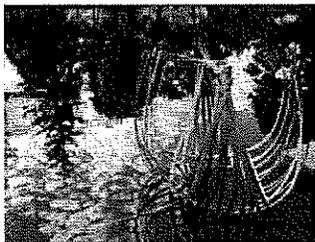
Each council must annually elect a chair, secretary and treasurer. To preserve continuity of operations, the terms of individual council members should be staggered (that is, there should never be 100 percent turnover of members in a single year). Staggering appointments is beneficial so that the council will always have some experienced members each year. LCCs may also elect to designate former officers or members as non-voting, ex-officio council members. Review the [membership section](#) for more information about recruiting members, training requirements, and how members should share the workload.

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Record-Keeping

All applications (both approved and disapproved), minutes of all meetings, disclosure forms and any other council records must be maintained in a public place. At least six years' worth of records must be kept in a secure space identified by the city or town clerk. Records more than six years old should be archived using the same procedures employed by the local government. City or town clerks can reference Massachusetts Statewide Records Retention Schedule L13 24 for additional information. To facilitate access to the current year's records, the chair may keep those records in his or her home; however, the city or town clerk should be notified of their location.

Information on members should be entered directly into the LCC Online Office and the town clerk's office should be provided with regular membership updates so potential applicants can find LCC contacts and get assistance when needed. All records of the actions of LCCs are considered public information and are subject to the state's [Public Records Law](#). LCCs must be available to respond to requests to view these materials "without unreasonable delay." The Public Records Law establishes a maximum delay of 10 days from the day of the request.



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Allocations Over \$20,000

The majority of the 329 councils manage allocations under \$5,000 annually. Larger councils - those receiving more than \$20,000 annually - are required to establish and maintain additional practices that are optional for smaller

LCCs. Larger LCCs are required to:

- Develop, utilize and publish council priorities
- Gather community input annually

Ensure that any paid administrator or clerk meet the online training requirement

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Regional Councils

Two or more towns may join forces to establish a regional council. Regional councils must consist of at least five but no more than 22 members appointed by the top appointing official in each community. Regional cultural councils may consist of an equal number of members from each city or town within the consortium or they may consist of a proportional membership consistent with the population of each municipality. However, there must be at least one representative appointed from each community in the consortium.

One town must agree to serve as the fiscal agent for the regional body, although this function may rotate periodically among towns. Regional consortia must be approved by Mass Cultural Council. Currently there are nine regional councils in operation across the state:

Acton-Boxborough Cultural Council

Alford-Edgremont Cultural Council

Charlemont-Hawley Cultural Council

Cultural Council of Northern Berkshire: Serving Adams, Cheshire, Clarksburg, Florida, Hancock, Lanesborough, Monroe, New Ashford, North Adams, Williamstown

Hamilton-Wenham Cultural Council

Hardwick-New Braintree Cultural Council

Hinsdale-Peru Cultural Council

Martha's Vineyard Cultural Council: Serving Aquinnah, Chilmark, Edgartown, Oak Bluffs, Tisbury and West Tisbury

Mid-Cape Cultural Council: Serving Barnstable and Yarmouth

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